Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for creating a message template used for embedding hidden messages, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) determining ~~a~~ the message template performance metric ~~comprising a dispersal measure having both a spatial domain function and a frequency domain function~~;

~~(b) developing a numerical optimization algorithm containing the message template performance metric as a basis for optimization;~~

~~(c)~~ (b) determining the message template geometric configuration comprising:

(i) determining a message template capacity

(ii) determining a message template area; and

(c) developing a numerical optimization algorithm containing the message template performance metric as a basis for optimization comprising:

i) initializing a current configuration that is randomly selected; and

ii) applying simulated annealing to the current configuration

~~(d) applying the numerical optimization algorithm to the message template geometric configuration which results in an optimal message template~~.

2. (Currently Amended) The method ~~as a~~ as in claim 1, wherein step (a) includes providing the spatial domain component as a requirement to disperse ones within the message template and providing the frequency domain component as a requirement as to eliminate replicating shifts.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Canceled)

5. (Canceled)

6. (Original) The method as in claim 1 further comprising the step of storing the optimal message template.

7. (Currently Amended) The method as in claim 1 further comprising using ~~(Lois to insert equation)~~

$$Disp(T)=\sum_{i=1}^{k}\min(Tor(\rho_i,\rho_j),1\le j\le k,j\ne i)$$

as the spatial domain component.

8. (Currently Amended) The method as in claim 1 further comprising the step of using ~~(Lois to insert equation)~~

$$FDisp(T)=\log_2(|A|)$$

as the frequency domain component.